Amendments to the Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method for detecting a predisposition to noncryptogenic liver disease in an individual human, the method comprising:

determining said predisposition to noncryptogenic liver disease by analyzing an individual human for a change in genotype of keratin relative to wild-type sequence wherein said ~~alteration~~ change is selected from a codon encoding K18 Δ64-71; K18 T102A; K18 H127L; K18 I149V; K18 R260Q; K18 E275G; K18 Q284R; K18 T294M; K18 T296I; K18 G339R; K8 G52V; K8 Y53H; K8 G61C; K8 R340H; K8 G433S; K8 R453C; and K8 1-465(I)RDT(468),

wherein the change is associated with a predisposition to noncryptogenic liver disease in said individual human.

2. (canceled)

3. (currently amended) A method for detecting a predisposition to ~~noncryptogenic liver disease~~ increased risk for viral hepatitis or acute fulminant hepatitis in an individual human, the method comprising:

determining said predisposition to noncryptogenic liver disease by analyzing nucleic acid of an individual human for a change in codon genotype relative to a wild-type sequence ~~of~~ that encodes keratin K8 at position 340[[.]],

wherein a mutation at position 340 of keratin K8 from CGT→CAT is associated with a predisposition to ~~noncryptogenic liver disease~~ increased risk for viral hepatitis or acute fulminant hepatitis in said individual human.

4-5. (canceled)

6. (currently amended) The method of Claim 3, wherein said analyzing the nucleic acid ~~genomic or mRNA sequences~~ comprises the steps of:

amplifying a region of the K8 coding sequences from isolated genomic DNA or mRNA to provide an amplified fragment;

detecting the presence of a mutated sequence in said amplified fragment.

7. (original) The method of Claim 6, wherein said detecting step comprises hybridization with a probe specific for said mutated sequence or digestion with specific restriction enzymes.

8-14. (canceled)